

to special interests. That was voted down, on a virtually party-line vote.

At that time, the majority leader indicated that he intended to take up this legislation by the end of May, or sometime in May.

Then I came back with a sense-of-the-Senate resolution which would have simply put the Senate on record saying that we will take this up by the end of May. That too was voted down. I said, wait a minute. The majority leader just said that he intended to do this, so let's put the whole Senate on record that by May we will have this legislation back on the floor for full consideration. Let us have a vote to affirm what the majority leader had just said was his intention, because I just had this sort of feeling that people were going to continue to delay and delay, as had been done in the past.

Mr. President, let me just be clear. Now it is May and nothing has happened; zero, zippo, nada, nothing has happened. No hearings have been held. No bills have been introduced. Nothing to my knowledge on the gift ban legislation is scheduled for floor consideration any time soon.

So the question is: Where is the majority party on this issue, where are the Republicans with their version of gift reform? Since 37 Republicans, including the majority leader, already cosponsored at the end of last year the same provisions that we offered in January and will offer again, as I said, as soon as we have an appropriate vehicle on the floor, what changes do they intend to make in this bill? Do they intend again, as some did last year—to try to gut the provisions of the charitable vacation travel to golf and tennis hot spots like Vail, Aspen, Florida, or the Bahamas where Members are wine and dined as guests of lobbyists and other special interests? Because, if they intend to try to gut those provisions, we intend for there to be a major debate. We cannot pass something saying we are not going to take gifts with these huge gaping holes and loopholes.

Do they intend again to try to hollow out gift ban reforms by just slightly lowering the thresholds for expensive meals, sports tickets, and other gifts paid for by special interests here in Washington so that they can say they are for reform? That would be symbolic politics at its worst.

Let me just simply say to you, Mr. President, this is an idea whose time has come, and come, and come again. I have been working on this for just over 2 years now, and the real standard for gift ban reform is a tightened-up bill that Senator LEVIN and I, Senator FEINGOLD and Senator LAUTENBERG, put forth in January. We will come to the floor and we will offer tough gift ban legislation. I believe the overwhelming majority of Senators, Democrats and Republicans alike, should support it. We really have had extensive bipartisan support in some overwhelming votes for this legislation. But each time along the way somebody

or some group of Senators figures out a way of sidetracking it.

The time is long past due for this reform. I think people in this country really are in a reform mood. And any Senator or Representative who believes that campaign finance reform or lobby disclosure or gift ban is just something that so-called good government groups are interested in, they are wrong. People want us to represent them well. They want this political process to be open and accountable. And many people, too many people, believe, and unfortunately I think they are right, that too few people have too much access to Senators and Representatives, and too many people, the vast majority of people, are left out of the decisionmaking loop, left out of the equation.

It is really time to get back to this reform agenda and finish up our work in this area. There are three critical parts, all of which I intend to one way or another help bring to the floor of the Senate for debate. One is campaign finance reform. That is fundamental. Another is the lobby disclosure, on which Senator LEVIN has taken a key leadership role. The other is the gift ban, where I will continue to work with Senators LEVIN, LAUTENBERG, FEINGOLD, and others.

I look forward to that debate. We will have that amendment out here on the floor soon and I think people in the country, whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or Independents, will hold us accountable.

I look forward to this debate. I look forward to this vote. I urge my colleagues to support our tough, sweeping gift ban legislation. I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Vermont, asks unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded. And without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS UNTIL 12:30 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of Vermont, asks unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until the hour of 12:30 p.m. today.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 11:36 p.m., recessed until 12:30 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. GRAMS).

COMMONSENSE PRODUCT LIABILITY AND LEGAL REFORM ACT

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Gorton Amendment No. 596, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending question is the Gorton amendment numbered 596 to the bill H.R. 956.

In my capacity as a Senator from Minnesota, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I might proceed for 15 minutes as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

TWO U.S. SENATORS

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I just want to say a few words about two U.S. Senators, one recently deceased and one recently embarked on a spirited new part of life, both of them dear friends of mine—Senator John Stennis of Mississippi and Senator DAVID PRYOR of Arkansas.

SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, Senator Stennis served with my father in the U.S. Senate. My father, Milward L. Simpson of Wyoming, served here from 1962 until 1966. He was a former Governor of Wyoming from 1954 until 1958, then came to the U.S. Senate, elected to fulfill a 4-year term, or remaining 4-year term, of a young man who had been elected to the Senate and died before he was sworn in. John Stennis and Mrs. Stennis immediately greeted my father when he came here in the most cordial way. They were very dear friends of my parents.

I must say that the philosophy of the western Senator, my father, and the southern gentleman, the Senator from Mississippi, were much the same with regard to national defense, fiscal matters, issues of substance in the social area, of the fabric of the country, and they became fast friends. I recall very distinctly my father called John Stennis "Mr. Integrity."

My father invited John Stennis, Senator Willis Robertson, and two other persons to Wyoming. I recall very distinctly. I was a young man practicing law in Cody, WY, and they asked me to join them. Dad took his two Senate friends fishing. You might imagine that John had not ever seen too much of Rocky Mountain trout fishing nor the attire that accompanies such activities. I will never forget him coming from his cabin, very nattily dressed, and he said, "Milward, is this what we